

The Interzone Poets Redux

*Poems read at
Kelly Moran's kickin' party in Wheaton, Illinois
January 12, 2008*



Eva Cassidy (1963-1996)

*Anne Kelly, Nicole Manisco,
Bill Robertson, and Dr. Jason Sturner*

Anne M. Kelly is a local writer from Geneva. She finds inspiration from the natural world and the mystery of foreign lands that she has never visited. She also writes about the journey of pain, the trials of the human soul, and the beauty of redemption. Anne has a passion for finely crafted words and prose and enjoys sharing her collection of short stories and poems with other writers. Feel free to contact Anne at annekelly@mac.com.



Nicole Manisco is a local area poet from St. Charles. She enjoys participating in open mic events throughout the Chicagoland area. In addition to writing and performing her own poetry, Nicole is an aspiring actor. Last year she performed in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, which ran at the Steel Beam Theatre in St. Charles.



Nicole began writing just four years ago after discovering the poetic genius of Anne Sexton; other influences include Sylvia Plath, Allen Ginsberg, Billy Collins, Mary Oliver and singer/songwriter Tori Amos. Feel free to contact Nicole at pilgrimsoulfire@hotmail.com.

Website: www.myspace.com/nicolemanisco

Bill Robertson: Since moving to Sandwich in mid-2004 with his wife Faith, Robertson has appeared at several open mic venues in Batavia and Geneva and has been published in the Fox Valley Arts Council's *Arts Beat* magazine. He is one of the few poets to have ever read in both Plano, Illinois and Plano, Texas. Feel free to contact Bill at willjrob3@yahoo.com.

Website: www.willjrob3.blogspot.com



Kelly's strange boyfriend Jason resides in Geneva too. From time to time he pulls a poem out of his ass and calls it art. Enjoy!



In the Midnight Hour...

by Anne M. Kelly

The moment is still –
a life is still –
a heartbeat is still

The lace curtain that caresses the wind –
lies listless –
in the midnight hour

The wind that floated by earlier –
is gently tucked in its bed –
in the midnight hour

The birds that graced the delicate branches
and filled their chests with song –
tuck their little heads under wing
for the night –
to compose tomorrows' song

They now exist in a world of silent dream

The moon is the only one –
to hear the grand solo
of the night

For Artists

by Anne M. Kelly

I long for my pen to write

I hope that my voice can sing

I wish for my soul to compose –

the symphony of life.

Gravity

by Anne M. Kelly

First sign of morning light

pierces my eyes with its sharpened silver-edged knife

Gravity weights me down as I rise out of bed

and sliver down the hallway to the shower.

Half in a fog, half in a dream,

I feel for the geometric light switch.

Its hard edges pull me into the day.

A day composed of hard edges –

far from the dream I left.

Flick, flick

Click, click

Bright light

Eyes squint in shocking rebel

Water falling over my delicate body forms a shiny skin,

that protects me from all of the elements.

It falls, it caresses, it warms, it tingles,

My body awakes...gently, naturally, wonderfully

lifting my world, releasing its weight.

Gravity pulls, my head descends

toward the motion of water swirling into the drain.

Circles become smaller

as liquid disappears through dark pinpointed holes

that suck the water into its open mouth.

For one last heavy swallow.

THE OTHER WOMAN

by Bill Robertson

First.

You must know

That I do not love you less

(But more,

If that is possible).

But when I see her

She fills my heart

With sunshine

And with daisies

(Her favorite flowers).

When she dances across my memory

I am caught again

In the net of her sweet love.

I can never let her go,

And I hope that you will understand,

But when I see her smiling out

Through your eyes,

Or catch a remembered gesture

Or expression,

I can never forget,

And will always love

The woman that you are now

And the girl that I met

On her 19th birthday.

THE FACE OF GOD

by Bill Robertson

Why do you believe he asked,
And I think I probably said
Because I've heard His voice.
And I stood there looking down on her
With her bruised, cut and stitched face
And her two eyes,
One swollen shut,
Swimming in pools of purple,
And I listened to her talk about the two operations
She was going to need to repair her broken legs
And why she feels so blessed.
She spoke of all her firsts.
Her first serious auto accident,
Her first ride in an ambulance,
Her first time in a helicopter,
Her first broken bones,
Her first stitches
And her first major round of x-rays.
And then she laughed,
And what a laugh.
Why do you believe he asked.
I should've said
Because I've seen His face.

62

by Bill Robertson

With parchment fingers that smell of long ago
I grasp at shadows of yesterday's tomorrows that never came.
Now I drive too slowly
And old men on motorcycles curse me as they pass.

STEVEN JAMES

by Bill Robertson

When day broke with her water
You would not be denied.
All early and so wanted,
Older brother's companion
And a parent's dream,
Yours was the first birth that i could attend,
And when you crowned
I was overcome by miracles,
Oh, and your cry,
Hung upside down
In a world too soon.
We went to wait
And wondered why.
And when the doctor said you'd died
Her understanding did not come,
And so he said
"But *you* know,"
And I did,
And when I held you in my arms,
Your limp arm splayed out to the side,
I wanted you to know,
Though here for just a while,
How much that you were loved.
And when I took your picture in that box
You looked so all forlorn.
Or maybe that was I,
In my inability to cry,
Who just imagined so much loss upon your face.
You slept your way to rapture dressed in white.
And when we put you in the ground,
No more to see the light,
And yet to know the breast,
I was overcome again with joy
That I,
At least,
Had seen you living.

burn

by Nicole Manisco

gonna glow some now
must look something like a star
burning somewhere
beneath sheets of clouds

(from afar)

my body sings heat
like a soft flame

and darkness is silence
the night you never came -
a little death
like the moments before sleep
in the space between dreams
and your lazy cheek
like a road block in my face

then can i have some space
can you give it air

not sure i care anymore
not sure i love you anymore

so i wear shame like a blush
and burn shyness like a crisis

from here you look much older
from there you can't feel touch

dark enough

by Nicole Manisco

saturated

swollen leaves in rain
and wind presses at my cage

hunger-girl faces her boy
wearing star-pricked skin -
nothing but a
bright burning pain

he pulls out his shades
and backs away
boy in a man-suit
nothing but the brain

don't tell your stories here
don't expect this audience
to scurry beneath your day
for crumbs of hurried words

not spoken
but remembered

muddied now
serrated margins
slow to a muffle

these tongues can't keep up
can't keep the speed of
what constitutes love

the girl must turn to earth
to fire and from wind

carry on rain
carry on you boy

there's dark enough to see
passion beneath these skies

a light murderous dark

by Nicole Manisco

it's a murder

caution tape decorates
deserted dinner plates
runs along the forgotten hall
and into the living room
that never saw much living

it's time to step out
they say
it's time to let the dust
have its way

everyone knows
the cars are arriving
the faces show
a blood-red spilling
and questions
questions

yes i bled you pale
yes you're critical and stale
but you can't be the only one
to hold the map
you can't lay out our death
in spreadsheets and graphs

call the mourners
inform them of the passing
(it's winter,
how appropriate)

so there it goes
and dead man walks
while i stand
outside the chalk
that marks

the end
the start
a light murderous dark

inventing

by Nicole Manisco

wallflowers tangled
in 2a.m. air and birdsong -

being bloomed

and as rough wages war
beneath our bodies
i invent you

a mozart
some mad masterpiece
moved by yeats
birthed as crow
penning my face
in the dark
transforming our glow
into fashionable art

reality is the
blood running down my leg
and your asphalt skin -
the layers of shingles
keeping your heat in

and there is a ripping
of flesh
of innocence
when i'm in your presence

still i invent
a crowded sky
tiny angels' eyes
winking at my back
singing us to spring
and your mouth
your mouth
rooting at my neck

Stopwatch

by Jason Sturmer

Everyone is dead.
Slumped against steering wheels,
on the floors of kitchens and bedrooms,
face down in swimming pools.

Bodies litter the malls,
the halls of prestigious universities,
they're in hospitals and sports bars,
at desks in corporate offices.

In the center of the oval office
lays the body of our president,
maggots crawl out
from beneath her eyelids.

The rats beneath the streets
lift their heads and twitch their noses.
Vultures fly off trees
into waves of decay.

Remnants of humanity crumble,
are buried, eroded and grown over.
We are dust and fossils; we are history.
The planet is lush and productive.

Out in an unnamed ocean
a new breed of dolphin is born,
its flippers more like modified claws.
One day, it will use them to grasp the shoreline.

Though Unseen, Her Soul is Lucid

by Jason Sturmer

And soft, like thoughts
on snowy evenings.
The amber fire inside of her
warms me.

She is filled with sympathy;
cries out when injustice
sets fire to the world.

She's a subtle understanding,
like Braille across the enigma
of wounds in the heart.

And though unseen, her soul is lucid.
A poetic ideal
I've always wished
to become.

And bright, like clouds
on snowy evenings.
The amber light inside of her
calms me.

She is filled with symphony;
sings out when justice
takes hold in the world.

She's my one true understanding.
A quiet hand reaching for mine
when my head is low, when I need love...

On a snowy evening.
In the amber glow.

My Morning Sickness

by Jason Sturmer

my morning sickness
is a morning dream
of reaching for the girl
that keeps falling
off my edge

reoccurring memories
dive-bomb the present
blooming up the gut
to break open
old scars in the heart

the dream fades
when day hits its fist
pulling fresh thin skin
over broken bone

I walk the park
in mindful stride
a stress-heavy head
chiseled clean by calm

I turn the corner
and sink into a stop
there, a man sits in the grass
holding his baby in laughter

and now, my morning sickness
concerns an unknown child—
a child that would look so much
like her and me

